

WHO/UNICEF SECRETARIAT SUPPORTING MEASLES OUTBREAK PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE IN THE PACIFIC

MEASLES OUTBREAK IN THE PACIFIC - SITUATION REPORT No 4 December 3, 2019.

Global measles resurgence

Since 2017, a global resurgence of measles cases has been affecting all regions of the world. In global immunization surveys, coverage for the second dose of measles-containing vaccine (MCV2) was 69%, with significant variability between regions. In the Asia Pacific region, outbreaks and clusters of measles cases are being reported from countries where measles has been eliminated, including Australia, Japan, New Zealand, Republic of Korea, as well as higher incidence in endemic countries such as Lao PDR, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam.

To date, Samoa, Tonga, Fiji and American Samoa have reported measles cases. The outbreaks in Samoa and Tonga are caused by the D8 strain (genotype) of measles virus. Measles vaccine coverage varies in Pacific island countries and areas, ranging from 31% in Samoa to 99% in the Cook Islands, Nauru and Niue.

Country Situation Overview

SAMOA

- The Samoa Ministry of Health declared a measles outbreak on 16 October. Wide community transmission continues, and the country is under a State of Emergency declared by the Government on 15 November. A Health Emergency Operations Centre (HEOC) meets daily for health sector coordination and provides updates on the situation (SITREPS 1,2,3)
- As of December 3, the MoH confirms a total of 3,881 cases with 153 new cases reported within the last 24 hours. Of all measles cases 51% (1,978) are children aged below five years. Of the 55 recorded deaths from measles, 91% (50), are children aged below five years. Of the 174 measles cases currently requiring hospitalization 83% are in Tupua Tamasese Meaole Hospital (TTMH). Eighteen children are critically ill in the Intensive Care Unit/High Dependency Unit (ICU). As of December 2019, vaccination coverage for infants and children aged 6 months to 4 years is 67%. *Source: Government of Samoa Facebook.* <https://www.facebook.com/samoagovt/>
- Incoming Emergency Medical Teams (EMTs) currently operational: Australia (AUSMAT), (United Kingdom (UKEMT), New Zealand (NZMAT, Counties Manukau, NZ Red Cross), French Polynesia EMT, Pacifica Medical Association (PACMAT). In addition, Norway EMT is to be deployed and Japan EMT has confirmed. In the coming days, additional EMTs might also be deploying as there are undergoing assessments. These EMTs are being coordinated through an EMT Coordination Cell (EMT-CC), led by the Ministry of Health and WHO.
- WHO's support to Samoa is being coordinated through the WHO Country Office for Samoa, American Samoa, Cook Islands, Niue and Tokelau. WHO has been supporting surveillance and epidemiology, immunization programme planning and implementation, infectious diseases and antimicrobial resistance monitoring and response, risk communication, and emergency medical team coordination (SITREP3).

- To date, WHO has deployed five public health experts - epidemiologists, an infectious disease and AMR specialist, a vaccinologist, a psychosocial support expert a risk communication officer, a logistician and a health cluster coordinator to date. WHO has established a surge pipeline for additional human resources, in addition to the ongoing technical collaboration between the Ministry of Health of Samoa and WHO under the Samoa Country Cooperation Strategy.
- In collaboration with UNICEF, WHO supported procurement of MR vaccines and Vitamin A as well as delivery of human immunoglobulin donated by French Polynesia.
- UNICEF has delivered to Samoa a total of 215,500 bundled¹ doses of MCV since 1 October and 30,000 Vitamin A capsules. UNICEF is providing an additional 50,000 bundled doses of MR vaccine and 5,000 capsules of Vitamin A which is scheduled to arrive in Apia on December 4th. Six units of ice-lined refrigerators (ILRs) and three emergency trolleys are in the pipeline. UNICEF has deployed one health and nutrition specialist, one communication for development specialist, one communications specialist, one logistician and a senior emergency coordinator to provide technical assistance to government and augment the Samoa-based immunisation specialist and child protection officer.
- UNICEF and WHO are providing technical support to the Risk Communications working group led by the Ministry of Health in the development of content for public service announcements on major national radio and television broadcasts, including talk shows, as well as for social media.
- The Ministry of Women, Community and Social Development (MWCSD) has deployed 20 outreach teams of 5 persons (3 MWCSD staff from Apia & 1 women's rep and 1 men's rep from villages) who are going door to door to 28,000 households to raise awareness on getting vaccinated as well as asking basic screening questions designed to identify children/families who may be experiencing psychosocial distress. UNICEF and WHO helped develop the community facilitation manual and briefed the team on its use. UNICEF supported the printing of the community facilitation package.
- Psychosocial Support Teams, managed by the Mental Health Unit, have been organized and mobilized as of 2nd December 2019. There are 4 teams targeting families, children/patients and staff in TTM hospital. Each team consists of persons from several stakeholders (NGOs, CSOs and Government), who go around hospital wards to offer psychosocial support to doctors, nurses, security guards, porters, volunteers and other hospital staff, who are likely to be exposed to secondary trauma from families affected by the outbreak. UNICEF, WHO and UNFPA provided technical assistance in the planning and development of materials for psychosocial support.
- Fifteen (15) tents provided by UNICEF have been installed in 12 hospitals and one health center. Five NEOC staff in Upolu and 6 MOH staff in Savai'i were trained in host to assemble and disassemble the tents.

TONGA

- On 22 October, the Tonga Ministry of Health declared a measles outbreak. The outbreak is characterized by transmission in boarding schools and has affected mainly teenage males and young adults. An interdisciplinary Epidemic Task Force conducts weekly measles response management meetings (See also SITREP 1,2,3).
- As of 03 December 2019, 440 cases of confirmed or suspected measles and no deaths have been recorded. Currently one child is hospitalised. Of all cases 247 (56%) occurred among adolescents

¹ including required diluent, auto destruct syringes, mixing syringes, and safety boxes

and young people aged 10 to 24 years. Eighty-seven percent (87%) are in the island of Tongatapu. Since the beginning of this outbreak, 10 measles cases required hospitalization. The Ministry of Health administered in total (as of 22/11/2019) 11,869 vaccines. *Source: Pacific Public Health Surveillance Network, Tonga, Situation Report 7, (27/11/2019) and daily briefings with MoH Tonga.*

- WHO has been providing public health technical support to Tonga via its Country Office, has deployed three epidemiologists to the MoH and has established a surge pipeline for additional human resources.
- On December 3, the MoH received 6,000 MR vaccines from UNICEF.
- Since 1 October, UNICEF has delivered a total of 18,000 bundled doses of MCV to Tonga and 1,500 capsules of Vitamin A. Two ILRs are also on their way to Tonga.

FIJI

- On 7 November, the Fiji Ministry of Health and Medical Services declared a measles outbreak in the Serua-Namosi Subdivision, Central Division. (See also SITREP 1,2,3).
- As of 03 December, 15 cases of measles have been confirmed. To date, confirmed cases are from, or are linked to cases in Serua/Namosi Subdivision (Wailali, Wainadoi, Navunikabi and Makosoi Deuba) and 3 from Suva (Samabuka and Vatuwaqa) and Rewa (Koronivia) subdivisions in the Central Division.
- Currently there are no hospitalisations from measles and no measles-related deaths have been reported. *Source: Ministry of Health & Medical Services, Measles Advisory 4, December 3, 2019. <https://www.health.gov.fj/?cat=12>*
- WHO and UNICEF have been providing the MoHMS with risk communications technical support including the development of mass media material.
- Since 1 October 2019, UNICEF has delivered a total 335,000 bundled doses of measles-containing vaccine. UNICEF has ordered an additional 400,000 bundled doses of MR vaccine and 401,000 Vitamin A capsules with funding from Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (Aus DFAT) and NZ MFAT.

AMERICAN SAMOA

- As of November 26 American Samoa is reporting 4 confirmed cases of measles (2 laboratory confirmed, 2 clinical with epidemiological link). All four were travelers from Apia, Samoa, who developed symptoms after arrival in American Samoa.

Preparedness activities

Various supplementary immunisation activities have been undertaken in all Pacific countries and areas. In support of these supplementary activities, UNICEF has delivered a total of 2,500 bundled doses of MCV as follows: 1,000 doses Niue, and 1,200 doses to Tokelau. At total of 75,360 additional bundled doses of MR vaccine are scheduled to be delivered by UNICEF this week as follows: 2,500 doses to Tuvalu; 1,000 doses to Niue; 16,860 doses to Solomon Islands; 5,000 doses to Kiribati; and 50,000 doses to Vanuatu.

UNICEF is providing technical assistance to preparedness and supplementary immunisation activities in Vanuatu, Solomon Islands, Kiribati, FSM and RMI.

Pacific Measles Communication toolkit

To help Pacific health authorities communicate about measles, WHO and UNICEF have developed a Pacific Measles Preparedness and Response Communication Toolkit.

Overview of Measles Containing Vaccines

Since 1 October 2019, UNICEF has delivered bundled measles containing vaccines to the following countries:

MCV Country Delivery Update 3 Dec 2019		
Country	Total MCV received in country since 01st Oct (doses)	Scheduled Deliveries (week of Dec 2nd)
Samoa	215,500	50,000
Fiji	335,000	
Tonga	18,000	
Vanuatu	30,000	50,000
Kiribati	0	5,000
Nauru	1,000	
FSM	0	
RMI	0	
Solomon Islands	0	16,860
Cook Islands	500	
Palau		
Niue	1,000	1,000
Tokelau	2,000	
Tuvalu	2,000	2,500
Total	605,000	125,360

British High Commission

At the request of the Government of Samoa, the UK Secretary of State for International Development (DFID) has approved the deployment of a UK Emergency Medical Team (UK EMT) to respond to the measles outbreak in Samoa. Thirteen UK experts (paediatric doctors and nurses and an anaesthetist) arrived in Apia on Sunday 1 December and commenced work on Monday 2 December embedded within an existing Australian Medical Assistance Team (AusMAT) which is supporting the Tupua Tamasese Meaole Hospital in Apia.

The secretariat would be pleased to include the support provided by other partners in the next and subsequent sitreps.

WHO/UNICEF weekly coordination meeting

A weekly coordination meeting will be held on Wednesdays at 09:30am at the WHO office in Suva – please let us know if you will join in person or by Zoom, by emailing Measles2019@who.int Any change in venue will be advised.

For those wishing to call in:

Join from PC, Mac, Linux, iOS or Android: <https://wpro-who.zoom.us/j/5993964937>

Or Telephone:

+1 669 900 6833 (US Toll), +1 646 876 9923 (US Toll)

Meeting ID: 599 396 4937

International numbers available: <https://wpro-who.zoom.us/j/5993964937>